

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJ: CPSU PLENUM REMOVES DEMICHEV AS SECRETARY FOR CULTURAL
AFFAIRS

1. CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM ON DECEMBER 16 HEARD
TRADITIONAL REPORTS ON 1975 PLAN AND BUDGET ON EVE
OF SUPREME SOVIET SESSION. DISCUSSANTS INCLUDED
POLITBURO MEMBERS SHCHERBITSKIY, KUNAYEV, AND
RASHIDOV. THE USUAL LOCALITIES WERE REPRESENTED BY
SPEAKERS ALTHOUGH LENINGRAD CITY LEADER B.I. ARISTOV
SPOKE INSTEAD OF POLITBURO CANDIDATE MEMBER G.V.
RAMANOV FROM OBLAST COMMITTEE. AS USUAL, DECREE
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APPROVED DRAFT PLAN AND BUDGET "IN THE MAIN."

BREZHNEV GAVE LONG SPEECH IN CONCLUSION, BUT CONTENTS WRE NOT REVEALED.

2. IN SOLE ORGANIZATIONAL MOVE, P.N. DEMICHEV WAS RELEASED FROM DUTIES AS CPSU SECRETARY.

3. COMMENT: THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THE FAILURE TO NAME A REPLACEMENT FOR DEMICHEV AS PARTY SECRETARY IN CHARGE OF IDEOLOGY IN CULTURAL AFFAIRS. FIRST, THE LEADERSHIP MAY NAME HIS SUCCESSOR IN THE NEAR FUTURE AFTER RELEASING HIM FROM HIS PRESENT POST. SECOND, THE FUNCTIONS DISCHARGED FORMERLY BY DEMICHEV MAY BE REDISTRIBUTED WITHIN THE PARTY SECRETARIAT. INDICATIONS OF THIS WOULD GENERALLY APPEAR AS THE PRESS INDICATED WHICH OF THE PRESENT CPSU SECRETARIES RECEIVED FOREIGN CULTURAL OFFICIALS. THIRD, THE TOP LEADERSHIP MAY STILL BE UNDECIDED OR EVEN DEADLOCKED OVER DEMICHEV'S SUCCESSOR.

4. A REDISTRIBUTION OF DUTIES WITHIN THE SECRETARIAT PRESUMABLY WOULD INCREASE THE ALREADY LARGE POWERS OF THE SECRETARIES. SUSLOV SEEMS THE MOST LOGICAL CANDIDATE AMONG PRESENT SECRETARIES TO SUPERVISE THE CULTURAL-IDEOLOGICAL FIELD, BUT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS PROBABLY WILL DETERMINE ANY REDISTRIBUTION OF ASSIGNMENTS. IN ANY CASE, KREMLIN WATCHERS MUST NOW SETTLE FOR A PERIOD OF CAREFUL OBSERVATION BEFORE DRAWING CONCLUSIONS ON SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NON-APPOINTMENT OF A SUCCESSOR TO DEMICHEV.

5. GEORGIAN PARTY LEADER E.A. SHEVARDNADZE TOOK PART IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE PLAN AND BUDGET DESPITE HIS LACK OF DE JURE MEMBERSHIP ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. HE PROBABLY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED A DE FACTO MEMBER WHO WILL RECEIVE FULL MEMBERSHIP AT THE NEXT PARTY CONGRESS.

6. THE SOVIET PRESS MAY INDICATE IN THE NEAR FUTURE THE CONTENTS OF BREZHNEV'S PLENUM SPEECH AS IT DID AFTER HIS CRITICISM OF THE ECONOMY IN DECEMBER 1972 PARTY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PLENUM. OR IT MAY BE PASSED OVER IN SILENCE AS WAS THE CASE AFTER THE PLENUM OF JULY 24 OF THIS YEAR. PRESUMABLY THE CONTENTS OF THE SPEECH WILL DICTATE THE TREATMENT.

7. EMBASSY FEELS THAT ROMANOV'S FAILURE TO SPEAK AT THE PLENUM SHOULD NOT BE READ AS AN INDICATOR OF POOR POLITICAL STANDING. HE HAS BEEN ACTIVE THIS YEAR, VISITED

CUBA IN FEBRUARY WITH BREZHNEV, VISITED PARIS IN
SEPTEMBER, AND PARTICIPATED IN RECENT 50TH ANNIVERSARY
MEETINGS IN THE REPUBLICS.
STOESSEL

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